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Eighty Club, London

National education

London

1913

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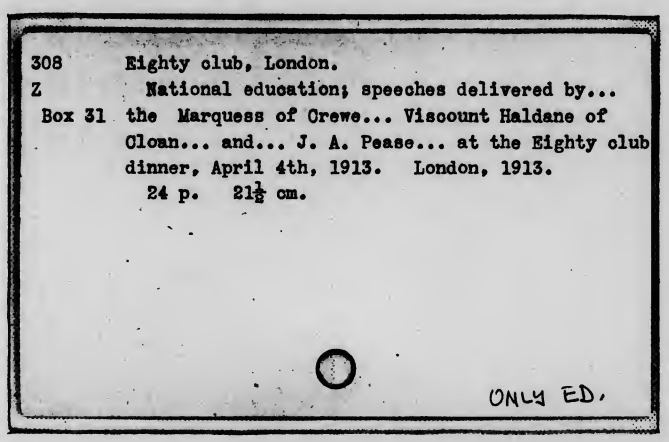
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Box 31
Eighty club, London.
National education; speeches delivered by...
the Marquess of Crewe... Viscount Haldane of
Cloan... and... J. A. Pease... at the Eighty club
dinner, April 4th, 1913. London, 1913.
24 p. 21½ cm.
ONLY ED.

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DATE FILMED: 1-15-97 INITIALS: PB.

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AUTHORISED EDITION.

308
Z Box 31

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

SPEECHES

DELIVERED BY THE RT. HON.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE

(Secretary for India),

THE RT. HON.

VISCOUNT HALDANE OF CLOAN

(Lord Chancellor),

AND

THE RT. HON.

J. A. PEASE, M.P.,

(President of the Board of Education),

AT THE

EIGHTY CLUB DINNER,

APRIL 4th, 1913.

PUBLISHED BY

THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT

(In connection with the National Liberal Federation and the Liberal Central Association),

42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

1913

PRICE ONE PENNY.

NOTE.

The three Speeches on the Education Question by members of the Cabinet reprinted in this pamphlet were made at a Dinner of the Eighty Club, held at the Criterion Restaurant on April 4th, 1913. The Marquess of Crewe, K.G. (President of the Eighty Club), presided over a large and representative gathering, numbering upwards of 300, and including a considerable number of Ladies. The Chairman, the Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Pease were the principal speakers, and were, on the motion of Sir Ryland Adkins, M.P., and Mr. Humphrey Paul, accorded a hearty vote of thanks.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION.

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE.

Lord Crewe said: My lords, ladies, and gentlemen. This is the first time that I have had the honour of addressing a meeting of the Eighty Club since the Club has been so good as to make me its President for the current year, and my first duty, therefore, is to return thanks to my friends for the honour which they have done me in appointing me to succeed so many men infinitely more worthy, I fear, of the place.

Now, we are met here to-night for the after-dinner purpose of a discussion on Education, and seeing that we are honoured by the presence of the Lord Chancellor, and also of my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Education—two most esteemed colleagues of mine—in view of that fact, I should have been glad merely to go through the form of offering a quite unnecessary introduction of these two gentlemen to the Club, and asking them to start and to go on for as long as they pleased; but my noble friend on my right, with, I believe, the approval of my right honourable friend on my left—(Mr. Pease: Hear, hear)—has asked me to say something on the subject of the evening, partly because both of them have already had certain opportunities, not as yet full opportunities, of discussing the subject, and I gather that the Lord Chancellor and the President would be glad to be relieved of some part of their task on this convivial occasion.

The Furtherance of National Education.

Now, we all remember the speech which the Lord Chancellor made at Manchester in the month of January, which aroused great, but by no means too great, interest and even excitement all through the three kingdoms, and since then both he and also Mr. Pease have had some opportunities of speaking in general terms on the hopes which the Government entertain that we may yet be able to do something in the cause of education.

It will, I think, be obvious to everybody here to-night that I cannot venture on this occasion to dot too many i's or to cross too many t's, but as we three and some others have been working at this subject for some time past, in hopes of submitting to Parliament a project for the furtherance of education, I will venture quite roughly to indicate one or two points of discussion which I think must necessarily come before Parliament in the course of the consideration of any measure which we may bring before the House. No one will remember better than the Lord Chancellor that when he, and Mr. Birrell, and I, and one or two others were engaged in the beginning of 1906 in considering how we could best deal with the education problem which confronted us so sternly on the formation

of the Government over which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman presided, that at that time the one object which was paramount in our minds was the formation, if possible, of a national system of education.

Obstacles in the Past.

To the formation at that time of such a system there were various obstacles. I need only mention two. One was the existence of what has been called the religious difficulty, the question of denominational and undenominational education in elementary schools, of which I need not attempt to narrate the history to this assembly, but which, as we all know, filled the minds of many of those who were responsible for returning to power the Liberal Government which was formed in 1905, and began its work in 1906. That was one obstacle to the attempt at the foundation at that time of a national system of education, and another obstacle which still exists, and always will exist, was the necessary cost attaching to such a project.

Now, one thing was quite clear to us then, as it is clear to us now, that the Education Act of 1902 never was, and never can be, of itself the basis of a national system of education; but when we come to consider what a system of national education means, we can recall that for many years past the favourite metaphor that has been employed is the metaphor of the ladder by which the infant and the boy or the girl may climb from the elementary school until they reach the University.

Wanted, a Slope Rather than a Ladder.

I have never myself particularly liked that metaphor of the ladder, as I ventured to say in the House of Lords at the opening of this Session. I have always preferred, if one must use a metaphor, that of an inclined plane—of a slope, by which the pupil or student can climb by gentle ascents, without abrupt changes or passages, from one kind of education to another, keeping always in view those delectable mountains on the peaks of which is seated the figure of Knowledge which seems to recede further and further the more we attempt to advance.

But leaving metaphor aside, when we come to consider how we can produce for this country a co-ordinated system of education we are at once confronted by the various and, indeed, essentially different, areas of administration in which the business of education has to be carried on. There is a vast machinery in existence for all kinds and grades of education, but the machinery is irregular in its action, and sometimes, we have to admit, imperfect in its operation. I suppose that everybody in this room has at his or her fingers' ends Part II. and Part III. of the Education Act of 1902, and that they are thoroughly acquainted as a matter of A B C with the powers which different urban and county authorities possess of putting in force the provisions of that beneficent statute. Certainly, if anyone

here is not fully acquainted with those details I have no intention of attempting to supply them; but I am sure we all know, without looking these things up (and I may say with a clear conscience that I have not to-day attempted to look at the Act of 1902), that counties and county boroughs have full powers in all matters relating both to elementary and to secondary education; that large urban districts of a certain population have other powers, and that small urban districts have, again, in some cases different powers.

Work of Existing Authorities.

Those powers, it must be remembered, to a certain extent overlap, that is to say, that although secondary education may in a particular district be the main business of a superior and larger local authority, yet the smaller authority may have concurrent powers for introducing and dealing with education that is not elementary within the same area. Well, these things are all very confusing, and if we can in some degree help to simplify the operations of that Act, we shall be doing, as we venture to think, a public service.

I do not believe, I say this quite frankly, that it would be possible for any Government to attempt to completely reshuffle the various authorities, removing from certain public bodies powers of which they value the exercise, in the hope of attaining a uniform system; and it is important to remember in this connection that mere size in administration is not a necessary criterion of efficiency. There are some large bodies administering large areas who are not any too efficient in the performance of their public duties, and there are some quite small bodies composed of keen men and keen women who are as efficient as my right honourable friend could possibly desire. Therefore, I do not pretend for a moment that we shall attempt to reshuffle the whole business of educational authorities in this country. (Mr. PEASE: Hear, hear.) But what I think we might do, and I hope you will be disposed to agree that it is not impossible—we might bring about, and we might even, I hope, venture to compel, with such powers of compulsion as my right hon. friend possesses, joint action for the purposes of education between the different authorities, working in close neighbourhood, or even in concert, with each other.

Need for Co-ordination.

Why should it not be possible, through the joint action of these different authorities, to bring about the formation of complete educational schemes covering the whole area of education from the elementary to the higher types of education—schemes which need not, of course, and would not be necessarily identical in different districts, but which would vary with the needs and the desires of the various areas concerned? Now, before we can get anything like a national system of education, I venture to think that there are one or two essential matters which we have to regard closely. One of them is the age at which the child leaves the elementary school.

It is a matter, I should have thought, which is somewhat damaging to the *amour propre* of this country that in all those countries on the Continent of Europe to which we look as supplying a standard of educational efficiency, the age of the child at leaving the elementary school is not less than fourteen and, in some cases, there is added to that necessity of remaining at the elementary school until fourteen the necessity of compulsory attendance at continuation schools to an age of two or three years exceeding that. Now, we all know that half-time possesses a deservedly ill-name in this country. Educationalists do not look, and I do not wonder at it, with favour upon half-time as conducted in various industrial districts; but I do not think it can be disputed that there are certain cases—certain parts of the country, and certain types of industrial life—in which what is even more important than the strict maintenance of a full-time elementary education is the definite continuance of education to an age considerably greater than that which the law now makes compulsory. On the other hand, there are some other parts of this country in which, I believe, the one thing to be desired and aimed at is the continuation of a full-time primary education for a period considerably longer than that which the law now enjoins.

Health in Schools.

Then we shall also have to consider the physical and the medical side of our education in all its grades. I am not going to speak about physical training—a subject which has become involved with other subjects which I have still less desire to mention—and I certainly do not intend to introduce that very argumentative topic into this amicable discussion; but we shall all, I think, who are interested in education, agree that both the medical and the physical training of the young form a side of education which, if we are to have a national system, it is altogether impossible to ignore. Now leaving out of the question all feelings of kindness or humanity, but looking at the matter from the most purely callous point of view, what a bad bargain we make in allowing children who are not properly furnished physically to attend our State schools.

Let us take three quite callous arguments.

In the first place, the child is attending the school at great expense to the country, and is probably deriving no benefit at all from that costly education. In the second place, this child is not being turned into a useful citizen—that is to say, still from the callous point of view, a useful industrial machine. In the third place, still callous, and even more recent, you are educating at great expense an unhealthy child who within a very short period after you have done with him or her, will become an insured person, and will, therefore, be entitled within a probably quite short space, to the medical or the sanatorium benefits of the insurance scheme, obviously, again, at a serious loss to the country.

After the Elementary Stage.

Well, looking at the subject from the most hard-hearted point of view, those three considerations point to a renewed consideration and, if necessary, a reorganisation of our medical and our physical methods of looking after and improving the condition of the children in our schools. Now, assume that the lad or the girl, healthy and sufficiently taught, has reached the period of leaving the elementary school. Some, though not all, will desire to go on to more advanced methods of education. It is now very nearly forty years ago since Matthew Arnold wrote an article familiar, I daresay, to many here, on the One Thing Needful—that was to say, the importance of secondary education to the social grade next to that of the great public schools in this country: and when he wrote that, nearly forty years ago, he complained that fifteen years before that again he had raised the subject and appealed to the common-sense of the country to do something effectual, and that how he had seen Governments change, and he had seen a programme of the aims and objects—twenty-two in number—which the Liberal Party entertained at that time, and among those the institution of a national system of secondary education was unhappily not included. That seems a long time ago.

I can remember, as I am advancing down the vale of years, the appearance of that article in a Review at the time, and it would be quite untrue, of course, to say that nothing has been done; it would be untrue to say anything but that a great deal has been done since Matthew Arnold wrote, but it is still true that we have not got a national system of education. And Matthew Arnold at that time compared, to our great disadvantage, the perfection of the French system of secondary schools, large in number, mainly free, and admirably taught, with our somewhat vague and incoherent system here.

Secondary Schools to be Registered.

Well, in approaching this side of the subject, ladies and gentlemen, one thing which we feel, and which I strongly feel myself, is that we must know what our secondary schools are. At this moment nobody, not even the pundits who surround my friend on the left, know in what the secondary education of this country really consists; what the precise number of the secondary schools is, still more what is the calibre of the teaching in a large proportion of them throughout the country. The remedy consists in some system of registration of all secondary schools, and I for one do not believe that our national defect—or merit—whichever you like to call it—of dislike of interference in our private affairs need in any way interfere with the acquisition of the knowledge which my friend here has, I venture to think, an absolute right to expect.

A great many secondary schools in receipt of public money would, as I believe, including some of the most famous in the country, be thoroughly pleased to be inspected from time to time by a public authority. It does not in the least follow that an inspection of that kind involves any measure of public control over their operations or their management. It does not necessarily involve the setting up by the Board of Education of a tremendously high standard of secondary education to which it cannot be expected that all schools will desire or be expected to conform. But I confess that I do suspect that there are secondary schools regarded as of a thoroughly "genteel" character at which the type of education given, and at which the standard of teaching is not such as to satisfy Mr. Pease; and if that is so, without inflicting any injury upon anybody, or inflicting any sort of fine, direct or indirect, upon the promoters of those schools, it is surely not unfair that they should be asked to set their houses in order.

What we want in this respect, I think, is something in the nature of a Food and Drugs Act in relation to education. That just as a man must not sell brown sugar which is founded on the sands of the sea shore, and he must not sell quinine which reposes only on the slippery basis of orange-peel, just so he must not provide mental nutriment for the youthful citizens or future citizens of this country which is unwholesome, or otherwise than substantial, although it may be of the plainest possible variety.

The Religious Difficulty to be Faced.

To go back for a moment to the elementary branch of education, I am not going to attempt to touch upon what is known as the religious difficulty. It is quite clear that if we are going to devise and enforce a national system of education covering the whole ground, it is impossible that that system can in all its parts and details represent the ideal of every individual belonging to every Church, or holding any conceivable religious view. But I think it ought not to be impossible to devise means by which those parents who would prefer that their children should attend a school of an undenominational character could have a better chance of doing so than they have at this moment; nor, just to go a step further, do I altogether despair of the possibility of getting over what we all agree is the difficult fence of the giving of special religious instruction by a particular denomination. That, as we know, is a subject which in the three Bills since the Government of 1905 was formed, has proved to be, perhaps, the most difficult of any; but, as I say, I do not at all despair of its being got over in and by the formation of a great national system.

The Cost of it All.

There is only one other topic on which I am compelled to say a word, but, from some points of view, it would probably be

regarded as the most important of any, and that is, the question of money, because it is evident that the formation of a system of this kind cannot merely be done by transferring figures from one column to another in a ledger, or by any means except the actual provision of funds. Now, everybody knows that the cost of our national education has gone on increasing and increasing—it goes on steadily year by year. Every year when the Government has to consider the national finances, my right hon. friend, or one of his predecessors, has come before us with a hideous figure, which represents what he quite accurately describes as "automatic increase."

And the cost does go on increasing greatly; and one point in relation to it which we have to bear in mind, because it throws light on the attitude of the public towards the whole subject, is that the proportion paid out of rates as against the proportion paid out of national funds has gone on, and is going on increasing, not merely absolutely but relatively, to the whole amount which we spend on education. The salaries of teachers—and I am sure we are none of us going to complain of that—go on costing more and more. I think it is not impossible that when the question comes to be fully examined, it will be found that they have to cost rather more still. The cost of medical attendance, the comparatively new one, as we know, adds a large item to the debit side of the balance-sheet. Well, I am certainly not going to hold out on behalf of the Government any roseate hopes of large reductions even in expenditure from the rates; but I do believe that much can be done by way of simplification, and by better arrangement even of the money which we have at present, which will act as a distinct and definite relief in a great number of cases. But still, quite beyond that, it is evident that we cannot co-ordinate our system without incurring a heavy cost—(MR. PEASE: Hear, hear)—and the question which the Government will have to put to the country is, Is it prepared when it has seen our proposals—is it prepared to say that the benefits which those proposals offer justify a further expenditure, which cannot be small, upon national education?

A Matter for the Country to Decide.

We must remember that we are entirely in the hands of the country in a matter of this kind. People talk about Government money, and money which the Government supplies. Government has no money. So far as Government has got any income of its own, it consists, so far as I am able to judge, entirely of the comparatively small items which are described under the head of "Miscellaneous" in the account of National Expenditure—namely, the interest on our holding in the Suez Canal shares, the profits which we make from silver coinage, and a few other items of that account which would not go far, I will not say in paying for education, but for any serious item of national expenditure. No, ladies and gentlemen, Government has no money. You, seated at these tables, and all our friends

and the other inhabitants of this country, have to put their hands into their pockets and say that they are prepared, or desire, to spend such-and-such extra amounts upon great national objects such as education.

We have had to spend, as we all know, a great deal of money on defence; the defence services have absorbed large sums of money; larger sums still—I am sure we grudge neither—have been spent on the great measures of social reform with which you are well acquainted. We always have to remember that so far as the rates are concerned, there is no more money to be got for educational purposes out of the rates. An Englishman pays his taxes in sorrow, but he pays his rates in anger, and I am quite certain that my right hon. friend will bear me out when I say that any attempt to apply to local authorities for increased large expenditure, or any expenditure, indeed, of any kind, upon education would be altogether futile.

Will the Nation Respond?

Now, ladies and gentlemen, is the country in favour of expenditure on education, or is it not? As I say, the Government in a matter of this kind, involving large expenditure, is entirely in the hands of the country. We hear a great deal now of the autocracy of the Cabinet, and of the slight control which private Members of Parliament have over either their time or their money; in small matters it is quite true that the Executive may be more directly powerful than it was, but when it comes to a question of large expenditure of this kind we simply have to go to the country and ask if they will support us in the undertaking.

Of the three nations who inhabit this island of Great Britain—I say nothing about Ireland for the moment—two, as we know, are both in fact and by repute urgently anxious for their national education. The history of Scotland, and the history of Wales—both those—the history of either may fill any Scotsman, or any Welshman, with pride. Well, how about John Bull? If we regard John Bull as he appears in caricature, the prospect is not a very hopeful one; his top-boots, his broad-brimmed hat, the seals at his fob, and the marked convexity of his anterior outline, all those point to the opinion that if in his establishment anything is consumed at midnight it is not the oil which lights the labours of the pallid scholar.

Some Hopeful Signs.

But I confess I do not anticipate with despair when England comes to be confronted with the prospect of a national system of education, England will refuse to pay for it. I bear in mind various hopeful signs. I have the honour to be Chairman of the Imperial College of Science and Technology at Kensington, and I know what strides we have been able to make there, largely through the private benefactions of liberal men, but I know also what use is being made of those benefactions, and of the enthusiasm with which our advance

in producing the highest forms of education is regarded by hundreds and by thousands of those who are interested in its provision. Then I look across to India, and I do not want—proud though I am of being in charge of the Government of India, I do not want England to be put to shame by our expenditure on education there. I am not going to trouble you with any account of Indian education, but I may just say this, that quite apart from local expenditure on education, which would put the figures 20 to 30 per cent. higher, that up to the year 1912 our expenditure there—with a very much smaller budget, remember, than ours here—was £2,000,000; in 1913 it was £2,750,000, and for 1913-14 I hope it will be £4,500,000.

And that being so, I repeat that I look hopefully forward to the prospect of English enthusiasm being evoked if we are able, as I trust we shall be, to place before them a genuine national scheme on a great scale.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have detained you far too long, but I have explained how I came to enter at some length into some points connected with our forthcoming proposals; and I will now ask the Lord Chancellor if he will be so good as to say a word to you.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

Lord Haldane said: I am one of the most venerable members of the Eighty Club. I was there before its foundations were laid, and I was one of its original members, in difficult times; but I will say to you at once that no meeting of the Eighty Club at which I have been present in all that long time has given me greater pleasure than this meeting. We are here at what I believe is the commencement of a new and very great movement for social reform. My noble friend beside whom I have been sitting has made to you a very remarkable speech—remarkable for this, that he has told you more than any of us have yet told you in the speeches we have made on this subject, of what the outlines of the Government plan are likely to be.

What the National Scheme Involves.

These outlines are not fixed and rigid—we are dealing with far too comprehensive a problem for that, one which branches out wherever you touch it; but he has told you enough to show the first form which these proposals must assume. And he has said to you this, and it is right that we should say it from the very commencement, to carry out these great advances—and they are very great advances, if they are accomplished—will involve large expenditure and a sacrifice on the part of the nation. It is right that we should realise that from the beginning—and to-night my task will be, first of all, to tell you how I believe that sacrifice is within your power, if you

choose to make it, for I agree with him that this is a question for the nation—the Government is willing; it has put its hand to this plough, but the driving power must come from the nation.

And the second is that, if it be possible, it is something that you have got to do if you would be true to your trust, and enable those who are to come after us to keep this country in the proud position which it occupies in the hierarchy of the world.

The Resources of the Country.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the first question is whether it is possible for us to incur the considerable expenditure which will be required for a new step forward. Let me recall to your mind the state of things half a century ago, when Mr. Gladstone governed the country on something like 70 millions of money, and to-day when we govern it needing something like 190 millions. In those days the national income, according to the best calculations, was some 850 millions, of which 70 millions was taken for government. To-day the national income is, to the best of my belief, somewhere well over 2,000 millions, and our prosperity shows no signs of abating, and my only concern is how to maintain the growth which has gone on in that marvellous fashion during these fifty years.

The percentage, I need not say to you, is very much the same to-day—the percentage of expenditure on Government to national income—as it was in those days. We can maintain that percentage if we are so minded; and let me say to you at once that I do not think we have much choice. There are people who talk of extravagance in Government. I have no doubt there is extravagance in Government, but the extravagance is nothing but a mere fraction to the growth of the necessary expenditure in Government. The answer is that all the other nations in the world have raised their level, have raised their standards, not merely in defence—of which we hear so much—but in other things, in matters of social reform, and, perhaps most of all, in this very question we are discussing to-night, of education. Now, that is no light matter.

The Strain of Competition.

I am an old War Minister, and I have great respect, and some apprehension of the progress which the French and Germans are making in aerial science, which is a very formidable thing in war; but I have far less apprehension of that than I have of the progress which they have been making on educational sides. Now, I want to bring that home to you in a concrete fashion in what I have to say. It is not that we are not making progress, but that the new organisation of society and of finance and of industry is pressing upon us a competition with other nations such as we never had to face before.

In old days when the British capitalist was richer than any capitalist in the world, he was a very different person from the capitalist of to-day. He was a respectable gentleman, with a white waistcoat and an anterior curve, such as my noble friend has described as characteristic of our race, and with his £100,000, and, in exceptional cases, with his £200,000, in his pocket, he commanded industries. There was something to be said for the picture Carl Marx drew in those days of the capitalist and the wage-earner to whom the capitalist could dictate terms. All that is altered. The joint-stock companies made an end of the old capitalist. To-day anyone can get as much capital as he likes if only he has got it in him to inspire confidence, and he inspires confidence if he is a great organiser, and if, as part of his organisation, he can bring to bear the scientific capacity which produces wealth far more than mechanical power or unskilled labour, on his own part, and, above all, on the part of those whom he employs; and unless he has a great field from which to draw his fellow-workers he cannot produce that wealth, and he must have educated men and skilled men, with their brains, even more than with their hands—though with their hands too—but it is essential that they must have brains.

Brains as Capital.

Well, what is the result of that? You have the great organiser getting together his highly skilled and technically trained people, and he commands the capital of the world because he has only to inspire capital with confidence and he can get as much as he wants, provided he holds out an assurance of a satisfactory rate of interest; and such is the competition to-day of capital for investment, that he can get as much as he wants at a comparatively low rate. The real secret of success lies not with the owners of capital, who are at his mercy, nor with the unskilled worker, who has to take, so long as he remains unskilled, what he can get over the margin of subsistence, but with that large and increasing band of highly capable people who are more and more monopolising the profits of industry.

But if we are to compete and get anything like an even distribution of those profits, then knowledge and skill and science must be far more diffused than they are at the present time; and what concerns me is that foreign nations are making this very advance in a way which seems to me to be a formidable menace to us.

Science and Steel at Sheffield.

Oh, we are not standing still. I went, not very long ago, to Sheffield, where, as you know, there is a new teaching University on a basis which, I think very wisely, has been so fashioned that it may provide for general learning, because without general learning you can get no fine technical education, and also for the special industries of the City of Sheffield. Ladies and gentlemen, I

went first in the motor-car of one of the great steel manufacturers to the metallurgical laboratory of the University, and there I saw, under the guidance of professors of the very highest eminence, the students working at the science of the steel industry. There they were, slim, lithe figures, a lot of them, and four or five older, portly and capable-looking people who looked very little professorial, but who, like them, had leather aprons on, and were only distinguishable by their age and size. They were foremen instructing them practically.

Then my host took me in his motor car down to one of the great steel works, and he said, "Now you will see a great change" —he told me this as we went down. He said, "fifteen years ago Sheffield was threatened; we were falling behind the Continent in the quality of the steel we were producing, but science has now made up for all that, and you will see how we are making use of the University"; and when we got there I found much the same scene, with this remarkable difference, that instead of four or five of the portly foremen, there were skilled men, trained in the works, who were instructing the students how to make steel. There they were, a vast assemblage of these capable workmen in their leather aprons, and about a dozen slim, slight figures rather older than the men I have seen, also with leather aprons, but with the stamp of knowledge and science written on their faces, and they were instructing their former instructors. Science had been brought to bear, and my host said to me: "They cannot touch Sheffield in quality of steel to-day, and that is the work of science."

Progress in the Shipyards.

I remember not very long after that, going to the Armstrong College at Newcastle, which is incorporated in the reformed University of Durham, and there I found the same kind of work, only that the industry was the highly technical and scientific one of the construction of ships. The shipbuilders of the Tyne contributed, and there were professors of naval construction, and the students were being trained in the science of that very difficult art. Newcastle and the shipyards of the Tyne were being permeated with modern science. Well, that has happened, and the only unfortunate thing is that it has happened still more elsewhere. It is happening in the United States on a great scale; it is happening in Germany on a great scale, and it is happening in France. But there are those in this country who are alive to these things. I have given you two industries, steel-making and shipbuilding, which have little place in the metropolis; but there are many other industries on the same footing, and above all there is that great field where technical education can do so much to the fitting of the workmen for the higher departments of work, which, on the face of it is largely manual, but which is different in quality according as knowledge incites the work of him who labours with his hands.

Now, as to that, great advances have been made abroad in late years. The skilled workman is paid very large wages, as you know, and they are increasing wages, I am glad to say, because they are the wages of knowledge and not merely the wages of unskilled labour. But other countries had been making advances so formidable in that that we had to begin to waken up. We live in the metropolis, and, like most people who live in the metropolis, we know very little of what is going on here. We do not visit the Tower, or look at the wonderful things in Westminster Abbey, and still less do we concern ourselves with the marvellous advances that have been made in education by the London County Council.

What is Being Done in London.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know few things more encouraging than the changes that have been made for the better, since the London County Council came into existence, in the department of Education. First of all, while elementary education is one thing, and the rigid principles of the Cockerton judgment separated it from the higher education, and above all from the technical education which belong to the science and art—first of all there came into existence the Technical Education Board—the T.E.B. it used to be called—which, under the auspices of a man who did magnificent work, Mr. Sidney Webb, made a great step forward in higher education in London. Then came the Act of 1902, and by 1904 the London County Council, with its new powers as the education authority, had got a start. Some of you do not read Blue Books, but there is an Orange Book which I read with very great pleasure whenever I see it, and that is the Education Report of the London County Council, and I am glad to think that we have got more than one representative of that remarkable educational body here to-night, and we have got their very remarkable Education Officer, Mr. Blair (whose signature is appended to that Report) present in the audience to-night.

Well, what does that Report do? It points out the startling advances that are being made on the Continent in the training of workmen, and the formidable character—I am talking of the Report issued last December—of the competition to which we are now exposed; and it speaks as to the advances that have been made, and the advances that will have to be made, and there is this sentence, which I think is a perfectly true one. It occurs early in the Report: "Public concern as to industrial competition may without hesitation be regarded as the source from which the technical education movement of the last quarter of the nineteenth century derived its main strength." Ladies and gentlemen, in a special Report, the London County Council go on to point out what is being done in Germany, and I want to say a word to you, even at the risk of being dull, about the specific thing which is being done in Germany, and which fills me with more apprehension than the account of the German Zeppelins, or German Parsevals, or French Bayards.

An Edinburgh Report.

I am going to quote, not this time from the Report of the London County Council, because you might think that is all one source, but I will take the Report of the Organiser of the Continuation Schools in my native city of Edinburgh. As you know, or as probably some of you do not know, in 1908 we pushed through —no one took any interest in it, and therefore we got it through— an Education Act for Scotland, under which, late at night, and fortunately when the public were not observing, we managed to give powers to local educational authorities in Scotland—the Board Schools as they are still—to enforce compulsory attendance at continuation classes up to the age of seventeen. Well, that process is being very gradually and very tentatively put into operation; and the Edinburgh School Board, in order to know where it was, sent over their Organiser to Germany, and above all instructed him to see what was being done by a very remarkable man, of whom we shall hear a great deal in the history of education hereafter, namely, Dr. Kerschensteiner of Munich.

I want to read you one or two sentences out of what the Education Commissioner reported—and when I tell you that what has been done in Munich is being done in Berlin, in Hamburg, in Leipzig, and elsewhere in Germany, you will see what a formidable condition of things we have to face. They found that the old notion of technical education was not nearly enough to produce the formidable type of workman which they wished to produce, so the Government set Dr. Kerschensteiner to work, and he re-fashioned —I am talking of Munich now—the Continuation Schools.

Munich as a Model.

"The course of instruction," says this Report, "was made to bear on the occupations of the pupils, who were qualified according to their trades (but that had to be very much developed); Dr. Kerschensteiner, therefore, felt it necessary to effect further changes. He made practical instruction the chief work of the school, believing that if he secured the good will and interest of the pupils thereby, more thorough progress would be made in the theoretical subjects of drawing, arithmetic, and so on (dull subjects if you force them on unwilling people, but with a very different aspect if it means not only developing their minds, but gaining them positions). In order to link up the Primary School with the Continuation School, manual instruction was introduced at the same time into the highest classes of the former."

Note that very significant thing. In the highest classes of the Primary Schools manual instruction is made the means of giving higher education, and it is being done in this country, in Manchester and elsewhere; but it is being done in Munich in a very extraordinary way.

"The active sympathy of employers and trade associations was secured without great difficulty, because they found that their apprentices were more keen and more thorough at their work as the result of the instruction given in the school workshop."

The Continuation Schools were made to deal with these cases, and the Continuation School has to deal with every boy or girl who is not being educated up in the ordinary schools to their eighteenth year. "The State must see," says the Report, "that its citizens are fit to use properly their right to take part in the government of their country." It is a very thorough programme.

"The Continuation School must engage the interest of the pupils by giving instruction relating to their trades. Theoretical, moral, and civic instruction will in that case be made more effective. The Continuation School must possess workshops and laboratories for practical work as the centre of its entire organisation."

I am not talking of what is in the air, but what is actually going on across the water. "The modern conditions of employment of boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen years are very defective." If that is true of Germany, how much more true is it of ourselves?

"In many workshops the chance of obtaining an all-round training is small indeed. Apprenticeship is one-sided. Thousands do not even have this one-sided apprenticeship, being treated as instruments of cheap labour. The delight that comes from thoroughness of work, and the moral effect of good work on character, can be learnt by these boys and girls in the Continuation School, if facilities for practical work are provided. The Continuation School must regard technical and trade education as means for mental and moral training." (I call that a golden sentence.)

"The aim and end of all the instruction given in the Continuation School must be to secure not merely the efficient workman, but also the good citizen who understands and is prepared to discharge his duties to the community and to the State."

How the German Slope is Arranged.

Then it goes on to explain how under the German system pupils who are going in for the professions or Civil Service leave the Primary School to go to the Secondary School, and there remain a long time; but all boys and girls who are not enrolled in one of these Secondary Schools have to attend a Continuation School— the boys during their apprenticeship, but not beyond eighteen years; and the girls for three hours a week for three years. It is said the pupils go willingly to the schools, and take great interest in the work. Then it explains how the pupils are accommodated:—

"The boys who are apprenticed to a trade are organised in fifty-two Trade Schools or courses, which, along with the advanced sections for journeymen and masters, are housed in seven specially equipped school-buildings throughout the town. One of these contains the commercial apprentices; a second the different branches of painters and decorators;

a third the various building trades; a fourth the printing trades, fine mechanics, and artistic smiths; a fifth the different kinds of wood workers. The classes for butchers are connected with the slaughter-house, and the classes for gardeners are accommodated in a building which has its own grounds. Six of the fifty-two courses are still carried on in elementary school buildings."

Our neighbours are nothing if not comprehensive. I am not going to trouble you with the details of all this, however; I will only say this, that with regard to the teachers, Dr. Kerschensteiner says:

"The teachers are recruited from all kinds of professions and vocations. Teachers co-operate with master workmen, journeymen, artisans, and agriculturists, and they exert an excellent influence upon each other. In reply to the question, 'Whether do you prefer to convert a tradesman into a teacher, or a teacher into a tradesman?' Dr. Kerschensteiner declared unhesitatingly in favour of the former course."

An Education Vote in France.

I have told you enough to show you what is going on, and what we have got to watch. But it is not only Germany, although that is very formidable, that we have got to see to. France has got a very formidable military budget to face, and yet only the other day the Chamber of Deputies voted £2,400,000 for education and also, in addition to that, a sum for salaries of the teachers, because they took the view that unless the teachers were made efficient you would not have the leverage necessary to raise that class of young Frenchmen and Frenchwomen to what they were to occupy if they were to hold their own.

Enterprise in New South Wales.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to say it is not only outside the Empire that these things are being done. I hold in my hand an Act of Parliament of New South Wales—and it gives me great pleasure to see my old friend Mr. B. R. Wise with us to-night—this is an Act of his Parliament which received the Royal Assent on December 3rd last, and a very remarkable Act it is, because it provides for giving access to University education for the young men and young women of New South Wales. It provides a scholarship for every one in five hundred of those who are between the ages of seventeen and twenty, to be obtained, of course, by competition, and by a very good form of competition, based on record in the secondary schools—not a mere cram-working examination—by which the picked boys and girls may have a chance of going to the University of Sydney, and be freed from the charges of the University, and enabled to pursue their own course of education.

It also provides for an automatic increase to the State subsidy based on the scale of one in five hundred of the population of New South Wales between seventeen and twenty. I call that a very remarkable example set to the Mother Country by New South Wales;

and one of the few cases I know parallel to it is the case of the London County Council again, which has done, in a different form, much the same thing in the way of giving access to University training on the part of promising pupils who come through the secondary schools.

What Lies Before Us.

Well, we are behind as a Government, but one or two of the local education authorities have been setting a fine example to the Government, and we have that example from one of the distant Dominions which is to me full of inspiration, as I cannot believe we will permanently in the Mother Country fall behind the example set to us by one of our own Dominions. I have spoken to you of these formidable things which are confronting us, of this formidable competition which is going to be far more formidable ahead. I have spoken to you mainly on technical education, and I have put the case up till now upon what I believe to be the vital necessity to us of making sure that we can maintain the national level amongst other nations. Remember what the national level means. It means the maintenance of this tremendous industry and money per head in which we excel at the present time, and which has placed us very high in the hierarchy of the world. We lead.

We have done more per head so far in the way of production of wealth than any other nation in the world, but in these days of science, and of that new organisation of capital through the joint stock company of which I have spoken, of the competition of men of all nations, the international competition for the first place, how are we to keep this position? By science, by organisation, and by training people in science and organisation? Yes; but that is not enough. In order to get the material out of which you may produce your big men, you must not confine that training only to the well-to-do, or think only of the few—it can never be more than a few—who can reach that level. You have got to raise the general educational level of the country. My noble friend spoke of that, and I agree with him from the very bottom of my soul.

The Need of a Sound Foundation.

It is the greatest fallacy to suppose you can deal with technical or scientific education apart from that broad general basis which applies, and is necessary for the entire population. Take the position of to-day. When I was at the War Office I was appalled to find that of the recruits we took something like 13 per cent. could not read or write. Why? They were taught to read and write at the Elementary Schools, but the moment they got out of those schools they forgot all about it; they had no interest in it. There were no Continuation Schools; there was no encouragement to continue in the higher phases their education which goes beyond

elementary education; there was no inducement to go to a secondary education which, for the most, was not obtainable. The result was we had 13 per cent. illiterate. Surely that shows something wrong with our national system?

If you wish your people to hold their own in the world, you must give them those chances and those incitements to be carried on which are given elsewhere; and whether it be the soldier, or the agricultural labourer, or the artisan in the town, who is keen enough about education for his children if he can only get it, and he will make great sacrifices to get it. The State will be never in a sound position until you have redressed the situation of to-day.

About Rural Education.

I know what rural education means in the Southern Counties of England; on the other hand, I sat for twenty-five years for an agricultural constituency in the East of Scotland, and a very remarkable experience it was. The agricultural labourers whom I represented were men who were keen about these things, meant to get them, and had got them. They were men whose wages in rent and money, and what they got otherwise, amounted to not less than 22s. They were great, burly, strong fellows, well educated, and with wives as keen as they were; the cottages without a speck of dirt among the furniture, and an abundance of books.

They read and they thought, did these men, and their sons were often in the Church—which is a democratic institution in Scotland, and therefore the subject of less violent controversies than in the South, in manner and the law and all sorts of things—working side by side, some of them, with their fathers. There was the breaking down of the class barrier through education, and father and son feeling they had much the same chance, and that it was a matter of accident whether one had gone to a learned profession or the other to a farm; the learned one was one who could manage a farm if the pinch came; he was a keen democratic, but in nothing so democratic as this, that he meant to have proper education for his children.

Education and the National Life.

The land question, as you know it in the South, was practically non-existent there. It was not of the acute kind we have to grapple with, and in this acute campaign for the land which my friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has embarked upon—a campaign which I thoroughly believe in, and which I think has nothing revolutionary about it—but which I conceive to be essential if you are to broaden the basis on which society rests, and therefore to give society greater stability, that campaign is intimately touched by this education problem about which Lord Crewe and I have been speaking to-night.

There is hardly a point that is not touched by this education question—the land, the home—because, as has already been said, the problem of the home is intimately and closely connected with this question of education; you have to go deep down, you have to touch the children below the school age as well as the children who can go to the schools, you have got to spread your education and this penetrating influence, down right to that period where the moulding of future lives is, perhaps, most effective of all. There is no part of the ground which should not be covered. Well, I need not say to you that that imports nothing short of a national system of education in the sense of a system which will take account of every phase of the question, and will insist on the right of the State to see that such a system exists. My noble friend spoke of the analogies to this in food and drugs, and other things, and it is profoundly true. One thing we have not yet considered necessary to deal strictly with is what is most necessary of all, the fashioning of future lives on which the interests of this country have to rest.

Our Obligations to Posterity.

This is one of the number of great campaigns which the Liberal Party have inaugurated. Some have been successful. We have helped the old with Old-Age Pensions; we have helped the present generation with Insurance, and we may help them yet further with the land. We have now to concern ourselves for the future, lest we should go down to posterity branded as a generation who did not recognise their obligations, who did not see the signs of the times or read them, who did not realise that the maintenance of the great position of this country in the world depends on how it educates and develops its future generations. To these we owe a great responsibility, and to these we are under a binding trust. Our burden in discharging these duties may be heavy, but it is not heavier than burdens which our forefathers bore for us when they carried us through the time of the Napoleonic campaigns, and bore a great load, and bore it without flinching, that the star of their country might not be dimmed.

And to-day the peril is a more subtle and less palpable one, but it is not less great. It is a peril, and I say it solemnly, with which we are face to face. Unless we rise to the levels which we see in the countries around us, we shall fail; we shall not have discharged our trust, and the future of the country must be a dwindling future. Will you let that be? If I know you, you will say that you will not let it be. It is a question of arousing the nation. As my noble friend said, unless the nation is at our backs, we cannot make headway; but if the Eighty Club will take its part in this great missionary campaign, if you will constitute yourselves into a Committee, into a body which seeks to spread the light in the midst of all the darkness which still exists, then I am not doubtful about the future. What is wanted is knowledge and faith; faith is required—the faith which can remove those mountains of ignorance and prejudice which block up the highway of progress.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION.

THE RT. HON. J. A. PEASE, M.P., said: At this late hour I do not propose to detain you many minutes. I do not know whether all of you have heard the story of a dentist who, after examining the mouth of a Scotch patient, saw the patient was somewhat nervous, and he said, "I am afraid I must put you under laughing-gas." The patient immediately began to pull the money out of his pocket, so the dentist said to him, "You need not trouble about your fee at the present moment"; but the patient replied, "Nae, nae, it is no that; if I was going to lose ma conscience, I thocht I would just see how I stood." Well, ladies and gentlemen, you have heard from Lord Crewe and from Lord Haldane to-night something in connection with the outline of what may be our Government proposals. We, as a nation, I believe, have one characteristic among many others, and that is that we are rather fond of criticising ourselves, and of examining ourselves, even to an excessive degree, and we often fail to take a true perspective of the situation.

Existing System to be Adopted.

Now, I claim to be a business man and no orator, but I do believe that at the present time we have made great strides towards that educational standard which we all desire to attain. Personally, I much prefer the old School Board system, taken as a whole, to the system which was established by Mr. Balfour in 1902. But, as a Government, we are not going to pull up by the roots the whole system which has been established under the Act of 1902, and we intend to make the best of the local Education Authorities as they exist to-day. And I must say here and now that since I have been at the Board of Education I have been surprised at the amount of excellent work, quite unobserved and real educational work, which those 320 local Education Authorities are performing at the present time.

Mainly, I believe, by the influence of those local Education Authorities we are securing rapidly popular control over public expenditure, whether it is obtained from the rates or from the taxes, in the maintenance of our elementary system. The very fact that since 1905, when we came into power, there have been transferred from the non-provided schools of the country 410,000 school children, and all these are now found—and there are 106,000 more—in the provided schools of the country under popular control, is at any rate an indication that under the administration of Mr. Birrell, Mr. McKenna, Mr. Runciman, and, to a certain limited extent, of myself, and with the great help of the local Education Authorities, you are having increasing public control over your school system throughout this country.

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